What does the Altgens Photograph prove about the Kennedy Assassination and the Warren Report?

The Altgens photograph taken at the time of the assassination must have been the source of much anguish on the part of the government personel working on the Kennedy assassination, for not only did it show what appears to be Lee Harvey Oswald in the doorway of the Depository Building, but, as Harold Weisberg discovered, it shows the placement of the presidential limousine in relation to the road marks, thus precisely placing the picture. But I have nowhere seen in the assassination literature a sound evaluation or analysis of just what this means to the reconstruction of the assassination. Harold Weisberg has had so much ground to cover in his investigations that he cannot be expected to dealve exaustively into each of the leads his work has uncovered. And because there was an element of inconclusiveness in his treatment of this aspect of the case Josiah Thompson has been able to ignore it in his reconstruction of the assassination in Six Seconds in Dallas. It is high time that this source of confusion and difference amoug the students of the assassinatin was cleared up, and I propose to do so here.

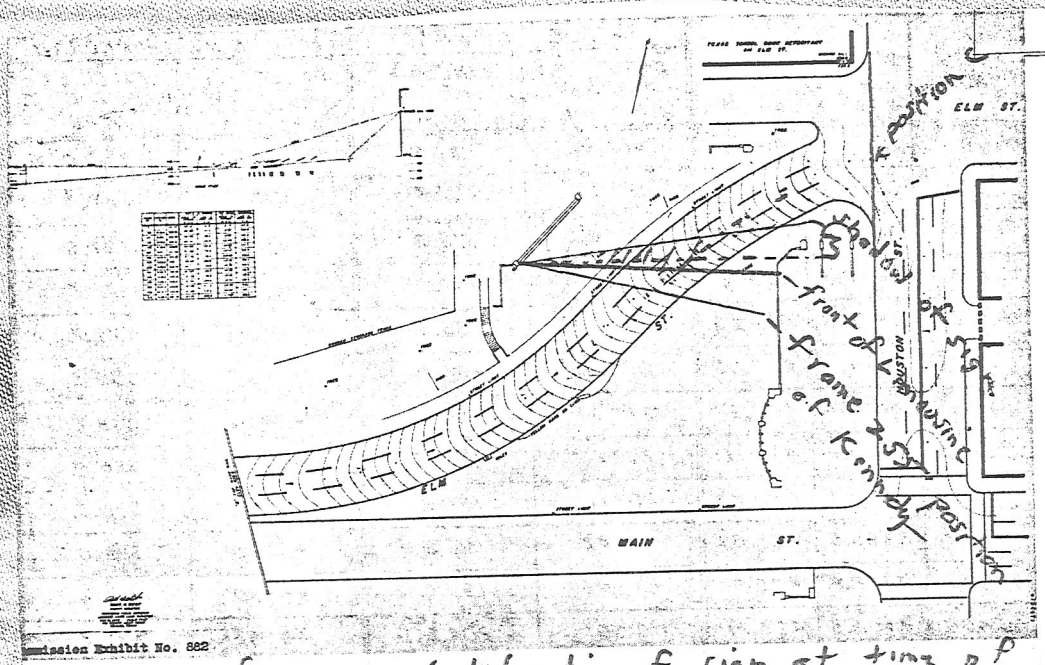
The Altgens photograph clearly shows reaction to the first shot on the part of secret servicemen in the motorcade. These on the right runningboard of the follow-up car behind the President's limousine had turned their heads to look back over their right shoulders, and the follow-up car behind the Vice-President's car had its door opened. There are other evidences less obvious. It was imperative to the conclusions of the Warren Report that this picture, which had been given wide publicity, should be placed well after the assumed beginning of the shooting. The Report assumed that the beginning of the shooting was about frame 210 on the Zapruder moving picture sequence, since that was the time the President had come in sight of the window at which Oswald was presumed to have been shooting, from behind the obscuring tree. The Warren Report states that the Altgens picture was taken at frame 255 of the Zapruder series; and Weisberg assumes this to have been true, while yet making his discovery that the full uncropped Altgens picture shows the presidential limousine where the Warren Report asserted the Limousine was at Z210 as the time of the first shot. This shows that either the Warren Report's assertion as to the correlation of the Zapruder pictures with the road was wrong, or that its statement of the coordination of the Altgens photograph with the Zapruder pictures was wrong, in the case disproving the Report. The reaction to the shooting shown on the Altgens photograph (located at the place on the road at which the Warren Report had assumed to be about the place of the first shot) would be 45 frames off from what the Warren Report had stated.

The question follows, why did the FBI for the Warren Report identify the Altgens photograph as being taken at the same time as Zapruder's 255th moving picture frame? The FBI's photographic expert, Shaneyfelt, testified (5H158) that Altgens' picture was taken "well past the signboard, well past (Zapurder's) 249, which is the last frame we considered." Commissioner McCloy responded, "well past the evidence of reaction."

The Warren Report asserts, in discussing the first shot, that "comparison of (Altgens) photograph with the Zapruder film, . . revealed that Altgens took his picture at approximately the same moment as frame 255 of the movie, 30 to 45 frames (approximately 2 seconds) later than the point at which the President was shot in the neck." Shaneyfelt must have known this was not true, he must have known that the Altgens picture was taken about the same time as frame 210 of the Zapruder pictures, for he with other FBI staff had reconstructed the position of the limousine at the time of the Altgens picture for the Warren Report's Commission Exhibit 900, and he must have known from this positioning what the Commission's and the FBI's map can show us now, that the Stemmons sign that concealed President Kennedy from Zapruder's photograph in his frame 210 also concealed the portion of the road on which the President was riding at the time of the Altgens photograph. On the map drawn for and used by the FBI, the Secret Service and the Commission as C.E. 882, the beginning of the fourth road mark, at which the presidential limousine was entering, can be shown to be at the end of the area blanked out by the Stemmons sign, proving that this was approximately Zapruder's frame 210. This map shows marks at twenty-five foot and hundred foot intervals of the travel of the Presidential limousine. The Warren Report asserted that the position of the President[illegible] at the time of Zapruder's 210th picture was 139 feet from the edge line of Houston street (position "C"). It asserts that "the President was probably shot between frames 210 and 225, which marked his position between 138.9 and 153.8 feet west of station C." Yet the official surveyor's chart will prove that the limousine was passing through this area at the time of the Altgens photograph, which shows such clear evidence of reaction to the first shot. In the Commission's exhibit 900 the reenactment of the Altgens scene is presented showing a surveyor's transit behind the stand-in for the presidential limousine. It is inconceivable that these gentlemen who were accurate to the tenth of a foot in their measurements did not measure from the President's position, or from just the position of the limousine to station C to determine the precise position of the President at the time of the Altgens photograph. Therefore we can identify FBI photographic expert Shaneyfelt as one of those people who are personally responsible --however much he may have worked under orders -- for falsification of the evidence so as to make it seem that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin of President Kennedy.

As further evidence of Mr. Shaneyfelt's personal responsibility, there is the fact that he supplied the Warren Commission the reversed order of frames of the fatal head shots as shown in Zapurder's pictures, and fusing the impression from these enlargements of a shot from in front, and that he had supplied the Commission a copy of the Zapurder moving picture in which the crucial frames from 207 to 213 (showing the President's reaction to the first shot before concealed by the Stemmons sign) were missing.

We conclude that with the revised timing of shots Lee Harvey Oswald could not have fired the first shot at President Kennedy (concealed from the "assassin's next by a tree), and that Josiah Thompson's reconstruction as well as that of the Warren Commission is in error.



Position of cars and obstruction of sign at time of Zapruder's frame 230 and Altgens photo -- also position of Kennedy at 210 and 255

COMMISSION EXHIBIT 882